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THE Heavenly Meſſenger;

OR, THE

CHILD's PLAIN PATH WAY

To Eternal Life.

42-4 9-42

You that are parents far and near,
Beſtow one penny on your children dear,
That they may underſtand the law of GOD,
And walk the righteous paths that ſaints have trod.

For if they practiſe and keep in mind,
What they within this book will find;
That may be done with very little pain,
Which will be for their everlaſting gain.

Licſened and Entered According to Order.

THE

Heavenly Meſſenger, &c

MR JAMES WORTHY, living in the city of Norwich in the county of Norfolk, was a gentlemen of a very good eſtate, and in great eſteem for his piety and charity; his whole delight being in the ſervice of God, and doing good to his neighbours, eſpecially thoſe that were poor: none ever aſked him any thing, that was truely needy, but he ſupplied their wants; neither was he ſevere to, or oppreſſed his poor tenants, but on the contrary he would often forgive them their rent, and help them in their neceſſities, ſo that they have been enabled to overcome their hardſhips and poverty, and to live well in the world; ſo that every one thought himſelf happy if he could get into any part of his eſtate to live, as if they were ſure to proſper.

This good gentleman married a very virtuous gentlewoman, the daughter of Mr Thomas Lovely, a very honeſt gentleman in that neighbourhood; by whom it pleaſed God to give him twelve ſons, and he had them baptized after the names of Jacob's twelve ſons; but it pleaſed God to take them all

all to himſelf, except Benjamin, his youngeſt ſon, whoſe birth was the death of his mother, to the great grief of his father.

This Mr Worthy taking his child to church with him one Sunday in June laſt, the parſon took his text out of Eccleſ. chap. xii. ver. 1. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, &c. Sermon being ended Mr Worthy took his ſon by the hand, and leading him through the church-yard, he happened to caſt his eyes upon the grave where his wife and eleven ſons lay, which ſtruck ſuch a damp on his ſpirits that he went home in a very melancholy condition; and being return'd to his houſe he leaned upon his elbow on a table, with his hand on his head, with tears guſhing from his eyes, he was very mournful; but at length concluding his grief, he uttered theſe words, 'Well I ſhall go to them, but they ſhall not come to me.' Now this child Benjamin though but ſix years old) ſeeing his father in a ſorrowful condition, came to him with tears in his eyes, ſaying, 'Pray father, tell me the meaning of theſe words, I ſhall go to them, but they ſhall not come to me?'

This queſtion much ſurprized the Father, it coming from a child ſo young; and being willing to reſolve him made him this reply, 'My dear child becauſe thy mother and brethren being dead, their bodies are turned to duſt, and their ſouls are gone to heaven, to God that gave them, there to live with him in everlaſting glory; ſo that it is impoſſible for them to come to us, but we muſt all die and our bodies will turn to duſt, and if we do well here on earth, God will receive us into his glory, ſo that we muſt go to them, but the'll not come to us.'

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Then ſaid the child, 'Heaven! Pray, my dear father, tell me, what heaven is?'

My dear child (ſays the father,) that is a place of endleſs joy and felicity, where Chriſt ſits at the right hand of God, in fullneſs of glory; where there is no ſorrow, no pain, nor trouble, but all tears are wiped away; where the angels and archangels, and all the company of the heavenly hoſt, as ſaints and martyrs, with the holy prophets and apoſtles, with the cherubim and ſeraphim are continually ſinging praiſes, hallelujahs, hymns, pſalms, and ſpiritual ſongs unto the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who is God bleſſed for ever and ever.'

Then ſaid the child, 'How do I long to be with God and my brethren—I have often heard and read of hell; pray father, tell me what place hell is?

My dear child, (ſaid the father,) hell is a place of endleſs torment and miſery, where all thoſe that forſake God's holy laws, and keep not his holy commandments are caſt into, ſuch as the drunkard, whoremonger, adulterer, ſwearer, liar, and thoſe that make mock at God's holy word, without any regard to the rules of the goſpel.

Then the child hearing this fell on his knees and uttered theſe expreſſions. 'O my God, I beſeech thee give me thy grace, and ſo ingraft it into my heart, that I may always tred thoſe paths which lead to eternal life, and this I beg for Jeſus) Chriſt his ſake.—Pray, father, (ſaid the child, now you have given me an account of the joys of heaven and the torments of hell, I deſire you will

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irect me how I may enjoy the one and eſcape the ther.'

'My dear child, (ſaid the Father,) I ſhall do it o my great joy and comfort: To enjoy heaven nd happineſs you muſt obſerve theſe things. ou muſt beg of God for his ſaving grace, lways minding the goodneſs of God towards ou; you muſt obey your parents, and obſerve heir counſel; keep to church conſtant; keep our tongue from evil ſpeaking, from ſwearing nd lying; to be true and juſt in all your affairs n the world; minding that there is a great God, hat can and will puniſh all ſuch as abuſe his fa- our and goodneſs; alſo by reading the ſcrip- ures often; and if you ſee your play-fellow do ffend God, do not as they do, but keep cloſe o God, he will never remove you nor forſake ou.'

Then ſaid the child, 'Pray, Father, is this all muſt do to gain heaven?

'My dear child, (ſaid the Father,) keep theſe hings, and forget not to be conſtaut and fervent n prayer, then God will certainly reward you with eaven and happineſs."

It was obſerved that this child would not go out f the houſe to ſchool or elſewhere, but he would ſk God's protection; neither would he eat or rink without craving God's bleſſing thereon. This ious courſe of life he led until the 22d day of No- ember laſt he was taken ill of a fever, and lan- uiſhed till Sunday following.

All the time of his ſickneſs he applied himſelf to rayer, meditation, ejaculation, and ſongs of raiſe to the Lord moſt high; ſo that it ſeemed s if his ſoul was in heaven, whilſt his body was

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on earth. As his father and relations were ſtanding round his bed, on a ſudden he cried out in a rapture of joy, ſaying, 'Now my dear father, methinks I hear the ſound of heavenly muſic in my ears, with the voice of angels and arch-angels, and all the company of the heavenly hoſt calling for me. Then crying out, O Lord! come, I come! ſweet Jeſus receive my ſpirit; he gave up the ghoſt to the great grief and diſſatisfaction of his father, and all other friends and relations.

In three days after, all things were prepared for the funeral, and a ſermon preached by the Rev. Mr Jones of the ſaid pariſh, he was interred in a vault with his mother and eleven brethren: His father with grief and trouble was ſo weak, that he could not go home without help, ſo that it pleaſed the miniſter, and two other gentlemen to accompany and aſſiſt him to be patient under his affliction but could not comfort him, ſo that Mr Jones reſolved to lie with him that night in hopes he ſhould be able to put him out of that immoderate ſorrow, but he would often cry out, 'O my ſon Benjamin, would to God I was with thee! This would he often cry out, until about twelve o'clock at night, caſting his eyes around he ſaw the apparition of his ſon, his youngeſt who turning to his father ſaid, 'Father, as you always foretold me that there was a heavenly reward for the righteous and a hell to torment the wicked in everlaſting burnings.'

'When my ſpirit took its flight from the body, it was immediately tranſlated to ſuch a place of joy, as neither tongue nor pen can expreſs, as you have heretofore told me; then my guide led me to

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a place of utter darkneſs, there did I behold the vile ſwearer, drunkard, extortioner, and many other heinous ſinners, curſing the day they were born, and the womb that bare them; there the devils were inſulting over them, upbraiding them with their folly; and as ſure as this is true, ſo ſure you will die to-morrow night.

Next day Mr Worthy and the Rev. Mr Jones declared the truth of this relation, he ſent for the two church-wardens, and gave them a large quantity of corn to be diſtributed amongſt the poor, as their need ſhould require; and ordered all his houſhold goods and hay to be ſold, and the money to be diſtributed to charitable uſes; left money for a ſermon to be preached one Sunday in every month for ever; and to every tenant he gave a year's rent, and having ſettled his earthly eſtate, he, like a juſt ſteward, reſigned himſelf to the will of his heavenly maſter; and at night, as his ſon had foretold he gave up the ghoſt. As he lived ſo he died, a true Chriſtian, a tender huſband, an indulgent father, a good neighbour, and to the poor a charitable benefactor. A ſermon was preached at his funeral; the text was taken from the 14th chap. of Luke, ver. 13, and 14. 'But when thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed, for they cannot recompence thee; For thou ſhalt be recompenced at the reſurrection of the juſt. Atteſted by

Richard King, Gent.

James Clark, } Church-wardens.
John Rogers }

EPITAPH.

EPITAPH.

MOURN, not dear friends for m
deceaſe,

For I with Chriſt have made my peace

Life is uncertain, death is ſure,

Sin gave the wound, and Chriſt th
cure.

FINIS.